



School of English, Journalism
& European Languages

JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS HONOURS

**HEJ409/410
Honours Research Essay A/B**

2008

http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/hons_jmc.htm

Honours Coordinator:	Dr Jason Bainbridge Room: SocSci579 Phone: 6226 7146 Email: Jason.Bainbridge@utas.edu.au
Consultation hours:	Monday 12pm-3pm
Unit description:	Students are required to complete a long research essay. Topic and supervisor to be nominated by the student in consultation with the School.
When taught:	Fortnightly meetings with supervisor.
Assessment:	12,500-word research essay (due end of second semester). For students commencing full-time enrolment in semester 1 2008, the essay is due 4.30pm, Friday 24 October . For students who commenced the essay in 2007, it is due 4.30pm Friday 6 June .

The Honours Research Project

Full-time students enrolling in semester 1 2008 should outline their proposal in Media Research Methodology in Weeks One and Two. The outline should describe your topic and give us some idea of your aims and how you plan to carry them out. JMC staff will then meet to discuss supervision arrangements. Once we have found an appropriate supervisor for you, it is your responsibility to arrange a meeting to discuss your research program. We have to ensure that staff have equitable workloads and sufficient time to devote to supervisions so we are not able to guarantee supervision in all areas. To avoid the worry of needing to reconsider your research topic it is vital to choose a topic that fits within the research areas covered by the school and to make time to discuss possible topics with us.

Research Project Supervision

Regular consultations with your supervisor will be necessary throughout the year. The frequency and duration of consultations may vary according to the stage of your research, but fortnightly meetings are the norm over the course of the project. Ask your supervisor about his or her preferred mode of submission of material (ie, electronic or hard copy) and any other practical issues that might facilitate the process. If you need to see your supervisor outside your agreed meeting times, please make an appointment via telephone or email.

The Honours research project is the first time most of you will have undertaken independent research at university. Accordingly, there will be many new aspects to this task including the depth of research, the word length, and the formulation and development of your own topic and intellectual position. The supervisor will provide guidance on the specific topic and on the process of structuring the essay, but it is important to remember that the long essay is an independent research project and it is the students' responsibility to follow their own research paths and to write and structure their essays. Your supervisor will provide advice and critiques of your work but the responsibility for writing and editing the essay remains with you.

Don't forget that the Honours Coordinator is also available for help with any matters not directly related to the research project.

Research Project Submission

You must submit three copies of the research project, presented according to current Harvard style. Some students choose to have their work bound, but this is not a requirement. The project must be submitted in hard copy form, with a signed cover sheet tucked inside, to the School office in Hobart by 4.30 pm on the due date. The word length is **12,500** words (*excluding* your List of Works Cited, but *including* all other material). You should meet this requirement but not exceed it by more than 500-1000 words.

The honours research project due date is regarded as an exam date. Any request for an extension must be submitted in advance of the due date and be accompanied by the same level of documentation as an application for a deferred exam.

Late projects will NOT be accepted so it is crucial that you submit the research project on the due date:

Semester 1 2008, **Friday June 6** (for students who commenced the essay in 2007) or Semester 2 2008, **Friday October 24** (for students who commenced the essay in semester 1 2008)

Research Project Assessment Criteria

The JMC Honours research essay will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- 1. Research skills**
 - Evidence of well-developed information retrieval skills
 - Evidence of familiarity with previous and recent work in the field of inquiry
 - Ability to identify relevant materials
 - Ability to formulate a viable topic
 - Ability to identify and apply relevant media research methodology
- 2. Clarity and strength of argument**
 - Ability to construct an engaging, persuasive argument
 - Capacity to develop and sustain the argument throughout the essay
 - Ability to present an effective conclusion that draws the long essay together
- 3. Contribution to knowledge**
 - Evidence of independent thinking
 - Contribution to knowledge or understanding of a subject as appropriate to Honours level
- 4. Structure and writing style**
 - Ability to structure the essay in a clear and logical way
 - Ability to write lucidly
 - Accuracy of grammar, punctuation and spelling
- 5. Presentation and observation of scholarly conventions**
 - Quality of layout and general presentation
 - Correctness of referencing techniques

Research Project Grades

HF 80-100 Honours – first class

These projects will be highly accomplished in all areas and will be characterised by a consistently excellent standard. Students producing work of this quality are considered worthy of a postgraduate research scholarship. A result at the higher end of this scale indicates that the student may be producing publishable work.

HU 70-79 Honours – second class upper division

The upper second class range of 70-79% is equivalent to the 75-79% distinction range for undergraduate work. Work in this range will be very competent, but with some inconsistencies in meeting at least one of the assessment criteria. Students producing work of this standard may still have the potential to undertake effective postgraduate research.

HL 60-69 Honours – second class lower division

The lower second class range of 60-69% is equivalent to a low distinction (70-74%) at undergraduate level. Work in this range will be competent, but will fall significantly short in relation to one or more of the assessment criteria. Students producing work at this level could not be considered for a postgraduate scholarship.

HT 50-59 Honours – third class

These projects will provide evidence of a serious attempt at honours work, but will have major inadequacies in relation to the assessment criteria. This work is considered to be completed at a minimally appropriate level for honours.

HN 0-49 Honours failure

There can be a variety of fundamental problems behind a fail assessment. Honours projects may fail if they demonstrate inadequate research and little critical engagement with relevant scholarship, or they may simply make no attempt to present an argument. The writing may be unintelligible, or the essay may be too short to develop the topic. Work in this range fails to meet the minimum standard appropriate for an honours degree.

It is crucial that you submit the research project on the due date:

Semester 2 2008 **Friday 24 October** (for full-time students who commenced Honours in semester 1 2008). For students who commenced the essay in 2007, it is due **4.30pm Friday 6 June**.

General Information

Staying in Contact

It is very important for us to keep in contact with you during the honours year, but this is sometimes difficult. The most effective way for us to keep in touch with the whole class is via email. Individual staff will use email to stay in contact and bring matters to your attention. Students are also encouraged to email each other. All students are expected to check their University email regularly. Note that we will use your official University email address.

Enrolment

It is important to get your enrolment details correct so that your results can be properly recorded and so that you do not incur extra HECs. Your final result for honours will be recorded against your Umbrella code which, for students enrolling in 2008, should be either HEJ400 (full-time) or HEJ401 (part-time). You need to enrol in this code for every semester you are enrolled in honours.

Full-time students must enrol in the 'umbrella course' HEJ400 in semester 1 and semester 2, and the compulsory units HEJ405 Media Research Methodology, HEJ409 Honours Research Essay A and HEJ410 Honours Research Essay B (note that although the Research Essay has two codes it remains a single project). Full-time students must also enrol in three coursework units.

Part-time students will normally complete honours over four semesters and must enrol in the 'umbrella course' HEJ401 in semester 1 and semester 2 in both years of their enrolment. They are advised to take HEJ405 Media Research Methodology plus three units in year 1, then HEJ409 and HEJ410 Honours Research Essay in year 2. Other course structures may be arranged through consultation with the honours coordinator.

Teaching arrangements

Units will normally be taught in weekly 3-hour seminars running for 9 weeks. Because of the length of these sessions it is particularly important that you attend all seminars. If you can't make it to class for some reason you should notify your unit coordinator. It is also a minimum expectation that you will have completed the set reading for each week and be prepared to contribute to discussions. Most classes require students to do in-class presentations. While these may not be assessed, they should be taken seriously as part of the learning process and as an opportunity to test ideas and approaches for the unit essay.

Coursework assessment

You will be expected to produce written work equivalent to 5000 words for each of your units. Honours essays differ significantly from most undergraduate work. You need to regard them as mini research projects that will require forward planning and consultation with your unit coordinator. It is important to start work on the essays as early as possible during the semester. Take special note of the comments and criticisms on your essays, and see staff to clarify any issues, if necessary. Marks will be given as grades only, not numerical marks.

Submission of written work

Assignments must be submitted in hard-copy form (not by email) to the School office by 4.30 pm on the due date.

NB. All submission dates are regarded as exam dates in the honours year.

Referencing essays

At honours level you will continue to use Harvard referencing style. See the online guide at: <http://fcms.its.utas.edu.au/arts/journalism/index.asp>. Located under 'Student Resources'.

Honours Marking Scale

HF	80-100	Honours – first class
HU	70-79	Honours – second class upper division
HL	60-69	Honours – second class lower division
HT	50-59	Honours – third class
HN	0-49	Honours failure

It is important to remember that the marking scale for Honours is different from that used at undergraduate levels. The upper second class range of 70-79% is equivalent to the 75-79% distinction range for undergraduate work. Similarly the lower second class range of 60-69% is equivalent to an undergraduate low distinction (70-74%). To be competitive for scholarships, you need to achieve a strong HF result. This is relevant to those of you who wish to continue with academic work. However, one of the many challenges of Honours is retaining focus on each of the tasks at hand and not being overwhelmed by investments in the year.

Post-graduate study and scholarships

Some of you may be considering post-graduate study. Scholarship forms for the University of Tasmania are available on the web and you can access other universities' forms in the same way and/or by contacting their Offices for Research. It is important to start investigating scholarship opportunities early in semester 2 as some forms take quite a lot of time to complete and you will need to organise referees for your applications. Most scholarship applications will need to be in before the end of October.

Information for prospective research higher degree candidates is available from the University's Graduate Research page:

<http://www.research.utas.edu.au/gr/scholarships/index.htm>

Facilities and assistance

Honours Room (SocSci317) access

The Faculty of Arts Honours Room is accessed using a proxy (aka swipe) card. The room is available for use by students studying Honours (& Postgraduate coursework programs) in the Faculty of Arts.

Proxy cards can be purchased from the TUU contact centre. Current student ID must be produced and an application form completed at the time of purchase.

To have the card activated for use with the Honours Room please email SEJEL.admin@utas.edu.au with the following information:

- Your name
- Your student ID number
- The number on your proxy card

You will receive a reply by email to let you know that your email has been received and when your card will be ready for use.

Note: If you already have a proxy card from previous study you do not need to purchase another one. Each card can be activated with multiple access permissions.

Student Rep

There is provision for an Honours representative to attend School meetings. If you are interested in taking on this role then please speak to your fellow Honours students and to the coordinator. It is useful for the Honours class to have a designated representative for liaison with the school.

Inter-library loans

Honours students have access to the Document Delivery Service, which means that the library will track down necessary resources for you from other libraries in Australia or overseas if they are not held at this University. Inter-library loans currently attract no charges, but all requests have to be approved by your supervisor. This is done by simply citing your supervisor's email address on the honours request form on the web. You can register for Document Delivery online by following the instructions at: <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/info/dd/index.html>.

Photocopying

At honours level you will be contributing to the research activity of the School and in recognition of this we give you some help towards photocopying costs. A one-off payment of \$30 will be credited to your student card. It is a good idea to give priority to inter-library loan photocopying, as these resources cannot be requested twice.

Removing the Boundaries

Honours students are encouraged to take part in School activities and especially to attend our term-time seminar series, 'Removing the Boundaries', on Fridays at 4 in room 555. You can find a list of speakers and topics on the web at: <http://www.utas.edu.au/ejel/rtb.htm>

Thesis Collection

Copies of Honours research projects completed by previous students within the school are held in the library.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Submission of Assignments

Students are required to submit a signed cover sheet with every assignment. This includes a declaration that all material submitted is their own work except where there is clear acknowledgement or reference to the work of others and that they have read the University statement on Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism) on the University website at www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism or in the Student Information Handbook. Assignment cover sheets are available from the School office or the School website. **Assignments submitted without a signed cover sheet will not be marked.** Students who submit assignments without a signed cover sheet will be contacted once via their UTAS email address; in such instances the cover sheet must be completed within two weeks of the due date.

All assignments must be submitted in hard-copy (not by email) and placed in the essay box at the School office on or before 5pm on the due date. Students are required to keep copies of all submitted assignments. Assignments submitted on time will be returned within three weeks of the due date; once on time assignments have been returned no further late assignments will be accepted. All marked assignments will be returned in tutorials unless otherwise advised.

Difficulties with your Studies

If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, have personal or life planning issues, disability or illness which may affect your course of study, you should raise these with your lecturer and/or one of the following Student Services staff as soon as possible:

- Learning Skills Adviser
- Disability Adviser
- Careers Adviser
- Student Counsellor

University Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

"**Plagiarism** is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own; for example, using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source, using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation, copying another student's work.

If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/supporting/academicintegrity/index.html>.

The intentional copying of someone else's work as one's own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline – Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/>."

The University and any persons authorised by the University may submit your assessable works to a plagiarism checking service, to obtain a report on possible instances of plagiarism. Assessable works may also be included in a reference database. It is a condition of this arrangement that the original author's permission is required before a work within the database can be viewed.

Assignment Presentation

The Journalism, Media and Communications discipline uses the Harvard style of referencing. Please see <http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/> for a brief introduction. For journalistic writing, refer to the JMC Style Guide, also available at <http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/>.

For journalistic assignments, you must not use material gathered for a story, including interviews, for assessment in more than one unit. If in doubt, please discuss with your unit coordinator.

Equipment

Please note that this unit may require access to sound and/or video recording equipment and that while the school will provide access to equipment during tutorials, access to equipment outside of tutorials is not guaranteed. Where the loan of equipment is possible students will be required to sign and agree to the terms and conditions of the loan, including the penalties for late return, as presented at the time of the loan.

Honours Marking Scale

The following distribution of marks and grades is applied in assessing your work:

- First Class (HF)—80-100%
- Second Class upper division (HU)—70-79%
- Second Class lower division (HL)—60-69%
- Third Class (HT)—50-59%
- Fail (HN)—0-49%

All marks are subject to moderation.

IT Support

Learning online—for online learning and Vista support – <http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/>
Information Technology Services—for general IT Support (includes link to UTAS download website)
<http://www.utas.edu.au/servicedesk/student/index.html>

Library Services—for information literacy support – <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/>
Help Desk (email HelpDesk@utas.edu.au or 6226 1818, within University 1818)